

‘Liars, A to D’
A Eugenesis Prologue

Page 1

Panel #1

Thin, black panel, save for one narrative box:

‘A long time ago – 56 million years, to be precise - something happened.’

Panel #2

Cybertron: high angle shot of a wide open plain very different from the buildings and metropolises covering the planet now. We see a few low-slung habitation pods that look like igloos in the distance, a few solar panels, etc. Primitive technology. What looks like half a moon hangs above the horizon (cf. half-built Death Star in ROTJ).

The first few Transformers (as many as you can comfortably fit into the panel) are pulling themselves out of soft, malleable metal fields (cf. origin story told in G2); they are low-tech, with minimal bodywork details - almost like protoforms. Steam rising from their bodies. Ill-defined faces.

Narrator (Caption 1, top left): **‘The first free-thinking mechanicals sprang suddenly and unexpectedly from the sizzling geostrata of a metallic planet.’**

Narrator (Caption 2, bottom right): **‘Spontaneous evolution: they say it just happened.’**

Panel #3

Close-up of one of the protoforms (maybe with another glimpsed in the background). Half-formed face, widely spaced optics streaming with fire, thin-lipped mouth, etc. Bubbled ‘skin’, perhaps.

Narrator caption: **‘And I would like to think that yes, this was only a matter of chance.’**

Panel #4

Earth, 1984, day. Long-range exterior shot of Mount St Hilary erupting.

Narrator (top left caption): **‘As reported in the *Portland Oracle*, September 20th, 1984. There is a story of a long-dormant volcano suddenly and unexpectedly shedding its load.’**

Narrator (bottom right caption): **‘Spontaneous eruption: they say it just happened.’**

Panel #5

Close up of the base of the volcano. The Ark sticks out, usual shot. Smoking debris rain down and bounce off the base thrusters.

Narrator: **‘But what the *Oracle* fails to mention, what it cannot possibly know, is that the explosion reactivated the on-board computer of an alien spacecraft that had been wedged at the volcano’s base for four million years.’**

Narrator (caption two, bottom right): **‘The computer began repairing the spaceship’s occupants...’**

Panel #6

Interior of the Ark, battered and bruised, floor covered in debris, etc. Autobots and Decepticons litter the floor. Aunty’s computer screens glowing. In the foreground, a winch/long-arm device is hoisting Prowl off the floor.

Narrator (caption one, top right): **‘...The spaceship’s occupants being the direct descendants of those first few free-thinking protoforms.’**

Narrator (caption two, bottom right): **‘And I’m trying to think that this was only a matter of chance.’**

Page 2

Panel #1

(Thin, stretching across top of page)

Cybertron, exterior. Semi-close up of an ‘aged’ Rodimus Prime (sporting injuries similar to those seen in *Aspects of Evil*), who stands on a podium between Star Saber, Springer* and Soundwave. He is leaning forward, putting his signature to an open book (like a PowerBook-type futuristic computer notepad thing).

Note: Springer has a visor and a scar across his right cheek (as you look at him) running all the way from his eye to his chin.

Narrator: **‘Ministry records describe an incident that occurred in Iacon, 2302, at the open-air signing of the Antimorphism Treaty.’**

Panel #2

(Large, taking up majority of page)

We pull back to see a large crowd of Autobots of all shapes and sizes, but very few we recognise. Video cameras bobbing in the air. The crowd has split to make room for the sudden appearance of this most unexpected visitor: an entire Cybertronian **city-street**, self-contained and rough round the edges, as if it has been torn from its moorings and dropped somewhere else, has just materialised in the middle of the stadium. It looks as if it's been teleported there. Standing in the street are several terrified, traumatised Autobots – neutralists, none that we recognise.

Narrator (caption, top left): **'A global audience of millions witnesses the sudden and unexpected arrival of an entire city-street, complete with terrified pedestrians.'**

Panel #3

Sideswipe and his guards manhandling the frightened empties/neutrals away.

Narrator: **'Spontaneous materialisation: they say it just happened.'**

Panel #4

Close-up of Star Saber's concerned, angry face. He does not know what's happening, but he knows it does not bode well.

Narrator: **'And it is the humble opinion of this narrator that this is not just "something that just happened"; this cannot be "one of those things"; this, please, cannot be that...'**

Page 3

Panel #1

(Roughly third of page)

Ext. Space. Looking down on Cybertron's orbit, on its planetary curve. The fragments of Moonbase 2 are pasted across orbit, where they've been hanging, ready to fall, since 2006. From this angle they look stable. The effect is one of remote calm.

Very top, left-hand corner of panel: **Cybertron, December 21st, 2012**

Taking up about a third of the panel, top-left, is the title: **Liars, A to D**

In smaller text underneath the title: **A *Eugenesis* Prologue**

Caption, bottom right-ish of panel, we have a snippet from the local weather forecast: **'Partly overcast with a slight chance of Rad Zone fallout, Force 10 grit-winds, 67% chance of gravity wells across the orbital rim.'**

Small text in white gutter between this panel and next: *‘With apologies to Kevin Rowland and P T Anderson’*

Panels #2 - #4

These panels are shaped like Earthen TV screens. On the screens is Galvatron, giving a face-to-the-camera rant/recruitment drive. Even though this is hi-tech Cybertron, 2012, we still have the visual cliché of a few lines of interference rolling down each screen. The speech bubbles are jagged to denote filtered sound. There is a telephone number running along the bottom of the screen (alien numerals).

Panel #2 – dialogue

Galvatron: **‘With Autobase destroyed and the so-called Resistance in its death throes, there has never been a better time to join the Decepticon army!’**

Panel #3 – dialogue

Galvatron: **‘Ever since the spectacular *coup d’etat* in 9th Cycle 549, the Decepticon junta has been recruiting thousands of civilians, from budding anarchists to ex-theoscientists, First Churchers to newly-sculpted protoforms. How else could we have maintained control of this planet for so long?’**

Panel #4 – dialogue

Galvatron: **‘If you’re looking for peace of mind, or a chance to indulge your bloodlust, or just a guarantee that you won’t be one of thousands killed in the imminent culling of every civilian settlement, now’s the time to join up.’**

Panel #5

Large-ish panel, similar in size to panel #1 of this page, running across bottom.

Int. Autobase, a darkened communications room, where Chromedome is sitting and watching Galvatron’s party political broadcast. A large screen to the left of the page shows Galvatron. Prowl, who’s holding a databoard shaped like a clipboard, is standing next to Chromedome. They are both looking at the screen.

Caption, top left of panel: **‘Deep inside the new Autobase’**

From screen: **‘Who returned Cybertron to its original orbit in 2000? The Decepticons! Who is committed to rejuvenating this world? The Decepticons!’**

Chromedome: **‘It’s a blanket broadcast – he’s bombarding the Southern Territories. There’s a contact number - you want me call?’**

Prowl: **‘Certainly not. You might as well go outside and wave a red flag.’**

Page 4

Panel #1

Galvatron's jagged speech bubble continues across the top of the panel: **'Pledge your allegiance to the Decepticon cause and help clean up this planet! Help crush the Autobots and their outdated, self-defeating code of ethics.'**

Close-up of Chromedome and Prowl.

Chromedome: **'You think that's all this is – a way to find out where we're hiding?'**

Prowl: **'I don't know. Galvatron seems so impassioned, so consumed – perhaps he's finally about to make the big push and end this once and for all.'**

Panel #2

Int. Darkmount 'broadcast room'. Close-up of Galvatron's head and shoulders.

Galvatron: **'Call this number now and commit yourself to a peaceful future – a future of wealth, progress and security!'**

Speech bubble coming in from off-panel: **'And... cut.'**

Panel #3

Pan back to see that 'Galvatron' is just a facsimile construct mounted on a pole and operated by Pounce, who is standing nearby. A hovering camera is filming the FC. Soundwave is standing in the background with his arms folded, holding a microphone attached to 'Galvatron'.

Soundwave: **'That will do for now.'**

Panel #4

Close-up of Soundwave, deep in thought (thought bubble): **'They think that this is cheap and belittling, and they're right. But what else can we do? How do you subjugate an entire planet when your leader...'**

Panel #5

Int. Galvatron's throne room. Very dark, atmospheric. He sits on the throne last seen, I think, in TFUK#147 – high-backed and set on a dais. Behind him is part of a large plexiglass window that bends around half the room. It overlooks Polyhex. Nothing outside but stars.

Galvatron's head is bowed. He is deep in thought.

Caption, top left corner: **'...hasn't spoken to anyone for decadorns?'**

Page 5

Panel #1

Smaller version of Panel #1, Page 3: Cybertron's orbital curve from space. The Moonbase fragments are not quite so tightly spaced now – they're gradually loosening.

Caption (inset from border): **'Nuke drifts from Manganese Mountains, pressure pockets north of Mytharc, engex-spill in Rust Sea, 84% chance of gravity wells across the orbital rim.'**

Panel #2

Int. Autobase, Rodimus Prime's quarters. He is laying on a circuit-slab, hooked up a bulky equipment. He does not look ill – he looks normal. No one else in room.

He is talking to himself, but the words seem like nonsense:

'tpr>x\\`w.r.w.r.>>.x*src.x'**

(Note: Sorry to be picky, but his 'words' need to be exactly as above)

Panel #3

Close-up of Rodimus' face, eyes wide

Rodimus: **t->x.y*src>>.x, t->x.z*src.x'**

Panel #4

Extreme close-up of his eye – we see a silhouette of Unicron's head where an iris would be.

Voice from off-panel: **'Prime!'**

Panel #5

Rodimus sitting up abruptly, pulling cables tight, while Kup bursts into the room, clearly concerned.

Kup: **'I thought you were having a seizure!'**

Rodimus: **'I'm fine, Kup – fine. I was just experimenting.'**

Rodimus (second speech bubble): **‘Actually no, I was clutching at straws. The First Church believes that if you recite the Primal Pentateuch while approaching VSS* you merge with the Allspark.’**

Bottom left of panel: ***Voluntary Systems Shutdown**

Page 6

Panel #1

Kup and Rodimus talking.

Kup: **‘And you think that would somehow banish Unicr—’**

Rodimus: **‘Kup! Remember the rules! Never use His name!’**

Rodimus (second bubble): **‘Look, I’m sorry... I’m just frustrated. My exorcism research is going nowhere. I’ve read all the Creationist literature – right back to the Keeper’s journals – and it’s told me nothing new.’**

Panel #2

The two robots talking.

Kup: **‘Sorry to hear that. I wanted to let you know that Perceptor’s arranged Nightbeat’s transferral from Delphi. He should be here in a few breems. Oh, and Cosmos has detected geo-fragments clustered around orbital co-ordinates 250/801 – he thinks they’re the remains of Moonbase 2. They’ve been hanging there since 2006.’**

Rodimus: **‘I thought Cosmos was supposed to be with Mirage and the others.’**

Kup: **‘The Helex trip? No – Thunderclash downsized the team.’**

Panel #3

Large-ish panel.

Exterior. Helex, Cybertron. Three Decepticons – Sixshot, Dirge and Frenzy – stand opposite three Autobots – Mirage, Rev-Tone and Quark. Pointing guns at each other – classic standoff. No one’s going to give an inch.

(You know what Rev-Tone looks like from Transtrip. Quark is a tall, slim Autobot who transforms into a Cybertronian hover-car. His chest-plate becomes the car’s bonnet; it’s grill and headlights become his midriff/stomach in robot mode; his

shoulder-plates rise up from his shoulders and are higher than his head; he has eyes, not a visor; the rest is up to you!)

Caption, top-left corner of panel: **‘He said that a surveillance mission didn’t need four people.’**

Sixshot (pointing his gun at Mirage): **‘Well?’**

Mirage (pointing his gun at Sixshot): **‘Well what? Let’s get this over with.’**

Rest of page 6 and all of page 7 is taken up with a fight between these six Transformers. I’ll leave the details to you but the following must happen before the end:

- ❑ Rev-Tone is hit squarely in the chest and his legs are blown off.
- ❑ Quark is not seriously injured but knocked off-line.
- ❑ Frenzy and Dirge are knocked off-line too.
- ❑ In the end it comes down to Mirage and Sixshot facing each other. Mirage has lost his weapon, Sixshot hasn’t – he has a chance to fire.

Final Panel on Page 7:

Mirage: **‘Typical.’**

Page 8

Panel #1

Now-familiar orbital shot – doesn’t need to be too big. Moonbase 2 fragments are still loosening.

Caption: **‘Tectonic slump in Terbium Planes, residual energon flare in Lonium, Scale 2 quake in the Sonic Canyons, 98% chance of gravity wells across the orbital rim.’**

Panel #2

An Autoshuttle rocketing through the air, pursued by Cyclonus and Scourge, who are firing at it – and missing.

Speech bubble from cockpit: **‘They’re still on our tail!’**

Panel #3

Interior of Autoshuttle. Cockpit. Cloudraker at the controls, Fastlane and Nightbeat alongside/behind him. The panel slightly favours Nightbeat (Mark’s phrase and I like it). In the background we see a stack of crates/storage boxes.

Cloudraker: **‘Thank you for pointing that out, Fastlane.’**

Nightbeat: **‘I don’t believe this – first time out the Canyons for four years and we run into these two. Perceptor better have a good reason for dragging me halfway across Cybertron.’**

Panel #4

Cyclonus and Scourge’s point-of-view as they chase the shuttle across highways and tower blocks.

Cyclonus: **‘Nice one, flyboy! Now they know we’re after them! We could’ve tracked them right to their front door if you hadn’t opened fire!’**

Scourge: **‘Right now, I’ve got more important things on my mind!’**

Panel #5

Cyclonus’ shot hits home: the back of the Autoshuttle goes up in flames.

Speech bubble from cockpit: **‘Cloudraker! We’ve been—’**

2nd speech bubble from cockpit: **‘Don’t even say it, Fastlane!’**

Panel #6

Int. shuttle. Nightbeat leans over a radar scope which is studded with blips.

Nightbeat: **‘I know this isn’t the time, but I’m picking up a lot of airborne activity. Hundreds of blips – no, thousands. All heading this way.’**

Page 9

Panel #1

Familiar orbital shot, except this time there are no Moonbase fragments – they’ve just fallen out of shot.

Caption: **‘Risk of heavy showers.’**

Panel #2

Large-ish panel.

Autoshuttle and its pursuers surrounded by falling Moonbase fragments of all shape and size – some tiny, some huge, like plates of metal bent out of shape. None of them have hit the three ships yet, but it's close.

Cyclonus: **'What the hell is happening? It's raining metal!'**

Scourge: **'Back off – it's too dangerous.'**

Panel #3

The two Decepticons beat a retreat, weaving through the raining debris (we see their jet-trails to indicate the path they've chosen).

Panel #4

The two jets transform and land. It's stopped 'raining' now. In the distance we can just make out the Autoshuttle's rear thrusters.

Cyclonus: **'They're heading towards Iacon. At least we know the new base is somewhere near their old stomping ground.'**

Scourge: **'You scanned the shuttle, right? Who was on board?'**

Page 10

Panel #1

Cyclonus: **'Nightbeat, Fastlane and Cloudraker. Why?'**

Scourge (looking worried): **'Oh, just curious. No reason.'**

Scourge (thinking): **'It's starting, just as I knew it would.'**

Panel #2

Close-up of Scourge's head and shoulders. He's turned away from Cyclonus, who is glimpsed in the background. Something is troubling Scourge, who looks downcast.

Scourge (thinking): **'Oh well. Here goes. Drastic times and all that...'**

Panel #3

Scourge's chest suddenly explodes (a bomb inside his chest has detonated). His head comes off, but remains intact. Cyclonus shields his face and screams.

Panel #4

Semi-aerial shot (at least high angle) of Mirage standing over Sixshot, who has been crushed by a large piece of falling Moonbase debris. His legs and one arm stick out, almost comically. His gun is a few meters away from his open hand.

Rev-Tone lies unconscious nearby, chest blown apart. His legs are no-where to be seen. Quark is by his side, head slumped, off-line. Other, smaller pieces of orbital debris litter the ground.

Mirage: **‘You shouldn’t have hesitated, Sixshot.’**

Panel #5

Mirage standing over Sixshot, gun levelled and ready to fire.

Mirage: **‘I won’t make the same mistake.’**

Page 11Panel #1

Caption: **December 22nd, 2012**

Rodimus Prime and Perceptor standing in viewing gallery. In the foreground is a very large hunk of mangled metal, which is laid out under spotlights like a precious archaeological find. It’s covered in intricate alien markings – you can make up the details, but make sure that the detail that grabs the reader’s attention is more pictorial than mere squiggles or doodles: a bold symbol that looks like an insignia or heraldic shield.

Rodimus: **‘And you say this particular piece is from the very core of Moonbase 2?’**

Perceptor: **‘Yes. It’s about 56 million years old. A genuine piece of Primon-era Cybertron! The chances of it surviving planetfall and landing on our doorstep are astronomical.’**

Panel #2

Rodimus: **‘Very exciting, Perceptor, but I get the feeling there’s something you’re not telling me.’**

Panel #3

Close-up of Perceptor at gallery window. In the foreground is a corner of the fragment – we see markings and diagrams in close-up.

Perceptor: **‘I expected the markings on the fragment to resemble those we found after the archaeological dig in Tene, but they don’t. I’ve cross-checked them against every vocab-code and dialect from the Golden Age onwards, and I’m certain of only one thing. Whatever they are...’**

Panel #4

Close-up of fragment. Follow same advice as for panel #1. Make sure that mysterious symbol is the centrepiece.

Caption, top left: **‘...They’re not Cybertronian.’**

Panel #5

Rodimus: **‘I suggest you think carefully about what you’ve found before making your report to the rest of High Command.’**

Perceptor: **‘What shall I do with the fragment? I need to study it further.’**

Rodimus: **‘Seal it inside the Sci-Lab in Eocra, with all the other evidence. After all...’**

Page 12

Panel #1

(Thin panel running across page.)

Caption: **‘...it’s not going anywhere.’**

Visual resume of panel #3, page 2: Ext. Cybertron, 2302, Treaty of Antimorphism, just after the city-street materialised.

Panel #2

Close-up of above, with Sideswipe’s guards wading in and arresting the bedraggled new arrivals.

Narrative caption, top left of panel: **‘SS/LONC/Personal Log Entry: I thought for a moment that the Treaty would be derailed, putting all our groundwork to waste. Thankfully, however, the disturbance was contained. Sideswipe’s men led the new arrivals – all of whom were understandably traumatised - to a place of safety...’**

Panel #3

Interior: A cell inside the Ministry (the Autobot HQ of the 24th Century). One of the Autobots who appeared on the city-street is sitting at a table. It looks as if he's been severely beaten: damaged face, cracked optical visor, oil stains, etc. An unfamiliar Autobot guard (complete with big insignia) stands behind him, fist clenched, having administered the beating. On the table is a futuristic tape recorder.

Caption: **'...where they were interviewed by our best counsellors.'**

Panel #4

Profile of the interrogated prisoner's head, bowed and shadowed, perhaps a few droplets of oil hanging from his face like saliva. In the background, standing behind bulletproof glass, we see Star Saber, hands behind his back, frowning.

Caption: **'All 13 of them were clearly delusional. They claimed to be Neutralists from the year 2013. The street that brought them here formed part of the Sci-Lab in Eocra, an old Iaconian suburb. According to Seisor, we'd witnessed a temporal flash, where a fragment of the past being superimposed onto the future. At this point I intervened.'**

Panel #5

Star Saber walking into the new-look Primal Chamber. Vacuum lifts have been added on either side of Primus' face and the Matrix Flame burns brightly in the corner. No one else is in the chamber. SS is heading for Primus' face plate, towards the open mouth.

Caption: **'What struck me most was their attitude. Even after their counselling, they maintained that they were *glad* to escape the year 2013. When asked why, they said that they'd been witnessing the end of the world, the end of Cybertron.'**

Panel #6

Star Saber walking into Primus's open mouth.

Caption: **'When I pointed out that this was patently untrue, because here we were, 300 years on, they looked at me as if I were mad. They asked how I could be so sure that this universe was the same as theirs.'**

Panel #7

We see what lies behind the Primal mask: a sparse, sterile hall filled with what look like filing cabinets that stretch from floor to ceiling. The cabinets are labelled but we can't read them from this distance. Star Saber is heading for a cabinet.

Caption: **‘Clearly, whatever happened in 2013, it was something big. I’ll have to search the Ministry’s membanks for more information on that period. I’d ask a trooper for an eye-witness account, but there seems to be so few survivors from that period.’**

Page 13

Panel #1

Close-up of Star Saber’s hand holding up a cylindrical container that looks similar to the one used in Beast Machines to extract Blackarachnia’s spark. In the background is an open ‘filing cabinet’. Inside the container is a mind crystal (identical to Skids’, Grapple’s, etc., as seen in TFUK) clamped in place. The cylinder is labelled; the label curves around the cylinder. From this angle we see only the last letters of a name: **‘ALVATRON’**.

We can just make out other names on the filing cabinets in the background: RODIMUS PRIME, NIGHTBEAT, PROWL, PERCEPTOR, ULTRA MAGNUS, SOUNDWAVE (as many of these as you can fit).

Caption: **‘*Genuine* survivors, anyway.’**

Caption 2 (lower and to the right): **‘No wonder the historians call it The Great Purge.’**

Note between top panel and panels on rest of page: **POSTSCRIPT**

Panel #2

Thin, all-black panel, the same size and shape as Panel #1, Page 1.

Narrator: **‘And there is the account of Alpha Point, and Mount St Hilary, and the 13 Neutralists.’**

Panel #3

Exactly the same panel as Panel #2, Page 1.

Narrator: **‘There are stories of coincidence, and chance, and intersection and strange things told, and which is which, and who only knows...’**

Panel #4

Exactly the same panel as Panel #3, Page 1

Narrator: **‘And it is the humble opinion of this narrator that strange things happen all the time, and so it goes, and so it goes.’**

Narrator (caption two): **‘And as the Old Texts say, we may be through with the Past...’**

Panel #5

Same as the previous panel except we’ve panned back. We now see, for the first time, that someone is watching the newborn protoform; we just see the back of the watcher’s legs and his waist. The watcher is robotic - in fact he could be a Transformer, though not any Transformer that we’ve seen before.

One thing is clear: there are markings on the back of the watcher’s legs, and they match – perfectly – the markings that Rodimus Prime was looking at on Page 12, Panel 4. Ram this point home by making the easily-identifiable symbol much larger than the rest, and having other alien scribble around it.

Narrator: **‘...but the Past isn’t through with us.’**

Underneath the last panel, in the white space at the bottom right of the page:

‘To be continued in *Eugenesis: Fifth Epoch*, a novel from Transmasters UK’